

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Vice Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairman Durbin:

As you begin your work on the Fiscal Year 2017 Defense Appropriations bill, we write in strong support of fully funding U.S.-Israeli missile defense programs. These joint U.S.-Israel programs continue to yield critical defense capabilities that protect Israel from missile and rocket threats from as near as the Gaza Strip and Lebanon to as far as Iran. As you know, investments over the years in U.S.-Israeli missile defense programs have saved the lives of countless civilians from indiscriminate rocket and missile attacks.

The Fiscal Year 2017 President's Budget request includes funds for all three cooperative missile defense programs and a separate request for Iron Dome. As the United States and Israel work to conclude negotiations on a new Memorandum of Understanding regarding military aid, we respectfully request that you fund U.S.-Israeli missile defense programs to a level that will allow Israel to fully meet its national security requirements. In recent years, Congress has appropriated funding for these programs that met our ally's needs, even when that exceeded the President's Budget request. We ask that you again consider funding these programs at a level that will meet Israel's national security needs.

The three cooperative missile defense programs and the Iron Dome system meet core Israeli national security requirements. Iron Dome is designed to intercept very short-range rocket threats between two and forty-five miles, primarily fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon, or the Sinai Peninsula. Iron Dome's selective targeting system and radar are designed to fire its Tamir interceptors only at incoming projectiles that pose threats to population centers. The Arrow Weapon System empowers Israel to defend against imminent and emerging missile threats, and also yields data and technology that advances U.S. ballistic missile defense programs. David's Sling, designed to complement Iron Dome and the Arrow Weapon System, provides enhanced defense against threats from large caliber artillery rockets, tactical ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles.

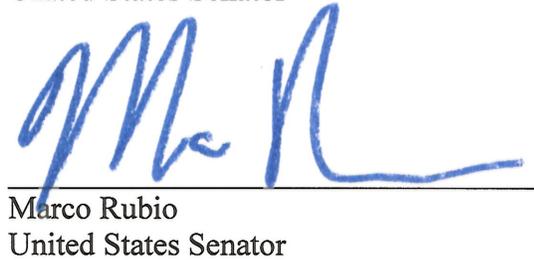
Amid growing rocket and missile threats in the Middle East, it is prudent for the United States and Israel to advance and accelerate bilateral cooperation on missile defense technologies. We therefore urge you to fully fund U.S.-Israeli joint missile defense programs so that Israel can

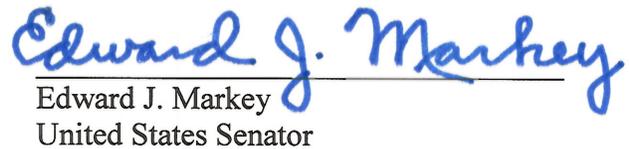
continue to develop and improve the three cooperative missile defense programs, as well as to purchase sufficient Iron Dome systems, including co-production of these systems in the United States, for protecting Israel's population against growing missile and rocket threats in the region.

Sincerely,


Mark Kirk
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Marco Rubio
United States Senator

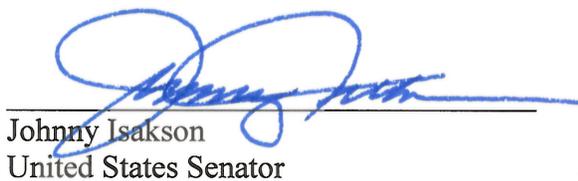

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

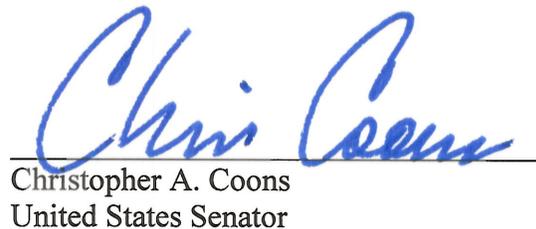

Thom Tillis
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


James M. Inhofe
United States Senator

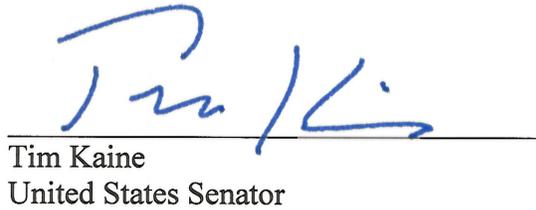

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Johnny Isakson
United States Senator

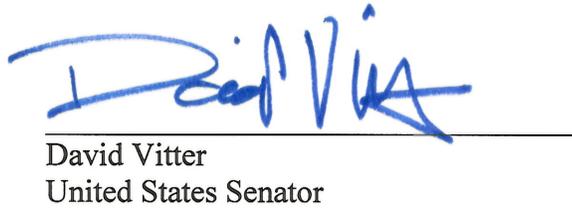

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



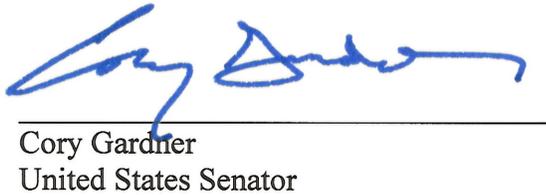
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



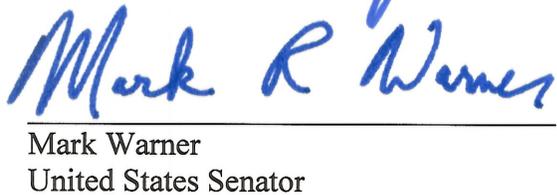
David Vitter
United States Senator



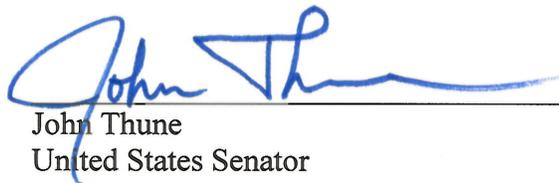
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Mark Warner
United States Senator



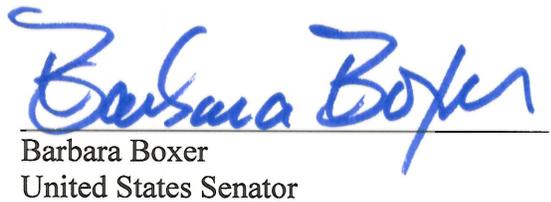
John Thune
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Gary C. Peters
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Richard Burr
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



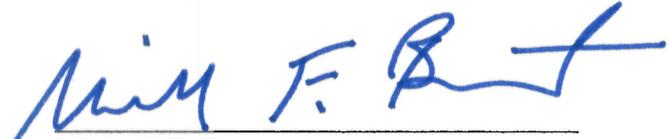
David A. Perdue
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



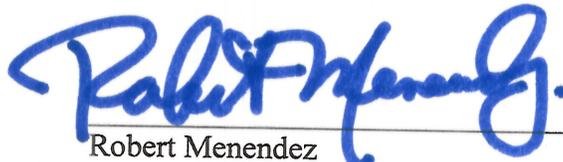
Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator